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AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION IN 1930

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A radio talk by C. E. Smith, Extension Service, delivered through WRC and 39 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, December 13 1930.

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Research in agriculture gets the facts. Extension carries these facts to the people on the farm and in the home. Extension shows the farmer and his family how to use the facts in growing crops and making a home.

Extension is a teaching work. It is teaching outside college walls. Whatever the colleges teach their students within college walls, these same things in their practical aspects extension is carrying to the farmer and his family and helping them apply on the farm and in the farm home.

Farmers are experimenters. They are quite venturesome. They try out many new crops and new ways on their own initiative. They are constantly learning new things. Extension forces visit these farmers. They learn the new things each farmer has learned. They then carry these new things to other farmers, and so farm knowledge spreads.

Extension work is thus seen to be a cooperative effort between government and farmers. No people in the United States are so close to their government -- National, State, and county -- as are farmers. Farm men and women in local communities have the opportunity to sit down with the agents of government around a common table and learn the results of experiment station work. They tell of their own local experiences. Out of these councils of farm men and women and agents of government come practical plans for the improvement of farm and home methods and conditions.

This work is officially known as cooperative agricultural extension work. Government and farmers cooperate in financing the work. They cooperate in hiring county agents, home demonstration agents, and boys' and girls' 4-H Club agents for carrying on the work. Together, farmer and government make plans for demonstrating better ways, keeping records, making reports, holding achievement days, making tours of observation, and like things.

Farmers and government are cooperating at the present time in employing over 6,100 technically-trained men and women, more than two-thirds of whom have their headquarters in counties, to carry on this work. It is costing them over \$25,000,000 a year. Over 250,000 farm men and women are voluntarily helping these 6,100 paid agents in carrying on the work. Each year the farmers and their families put on over 1,500,000 demonstrations to show the better way. Each year between three and four million farm men and women change some practice on the farm or in the home for the better as a result of this cooperative extension work.

This whole movement may be designated as a relatively new leaven in American rural life, second in importance only to the research and resident teaching work of the land-grant or agricultural colleges. This new leaven is stimulating to better endeavor in farming and home making. It is bringing rural people together in groups for social intercourse and study. It is solving rural, community and neighborhood problems. It is fostering better relations and common endeavor between town and country. It is bringing recreation, debate, pageantry,

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the drama, and art into the rural community. It is developing cooperation and enriching the lives and broadening the vision of rural men and women and farm youth everywhere.

I am to tell you today something of what this great extension organization has been doing during the current year. To begin with, over a thousand counties went dry this year. It has been one of the most serious and widespread droughts the United States has ever experienced, beginning with Virginia and Maryland in the East and extending to Texas in the Southwest and parts of Montana in the Northwest. Again, the county agricultural agents and home demonstration agents have been on the spot to cooperate with other agencies in helping meet this situation.

The county agricultural agents were designated as the officials to determine what farmers and dealers were entitled to reduced railroad rates on feed, water, and hay shipped into the drought territory or on livestock shipped out. These agents approved applications for railroad rate reduction certificates for approximately 60,000 carloads shipped into drought territory.

The home demonstration agents in the drought area stressed the planting of fall gardens of quick-growing vegetables, like turnips and peas, to replace the summer gardens withered by the drought. Never in the history of the South were so many turnips planted. Turnip greens became the constant staple on almost every rural table once or twice daily.

As farmers were scant in their feed supplies for livestock and poultry, and livestock was being disposed of at a sacrifice, they were urged to kill and can to the largest practical limits. In Arkansas alone, over 700 demonstrations were put on in as many communities in canning a whole beef. The number of poultry canned extended into the thousands. Advice was also given to people in the whole drought area on the most economical and health-promoting foods to purchase where farm supplies were inadequate to prevent nutritional diseases.

Throughout the entire country, also, county extension agents and extension specialists have been stressing the economic phases of agriculture. The low prices for cotton and wheat and the agricultural depression have focused attention of agents and farmers on both farm management and cooperative marketing. Wide-spread attention has been given to the need of better adjustment of production of farm crops and animal products to the wants of the nation. An excessively large crop of corn or cotton or other farm product is as serious to the farmer as is the over-production of automobiles for the manufacturer. Active steps have been taken to meet this situation. Never in the history of extension has so much interest and time been given to agricultural economics as have been given this current year by extension forces.

One of the substantial accomplishments of the year has been the greater control of wheat smut. Some counties in the Central States reported more than 90 per cent of the seed wheat planted had been treated with copper carbonate or formaldehyde, resulting in a wheat crop that sold from two to fifteen cents more per bushel than untreated wheat.

The production of hogs has been cheapened. Four hundred fifty-eight Illinois farmers who cooperated in hog management demonstrations this year reported that the methods of growing and fattening hogs recommended by the State Extension Service resulted in cutting off six weeks from the average time required to produce a two hundred pound hog.

Substantial progress has been made in widely-separated areas of the United States during the year in setting up desirable standards of living on the farm and then considering the readjustments necessary on the farm to attain such standards. Labor sets up certain minimum standards of living in industry and demands a wage that shall permit such standards. This practice is growing among farmers and extension forces are active in aiding in the movement. It is desired in the best interests of the whole nation that the farm home be as attractive, as convenient, as satisfying as the home in town and that the opportunity for recreation, social life, and culture shall be expanded in rural areas, so that there may be retained on the farm an efficient and contented people, competent to produce all the food and fiber needed by the nation in times of either peace or war.

In closing, we would leave in your minds the thought of around 700,000 farm men and women and 800,000 rural boys and girls staging 1,500,000 demonstrations annually on the farm and in the farm home, showing the better way, and between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 farm men and women changing some old practice for a new as a result of cooperative extension work. We would have you picture this work as an intimately cooperative enterprize between farming people and government and have you remember that the State colleges of agriculture are responsible for training the technical extension agents who guide the work, and that it is the State experiment stations and Federal Department of Agriculture which furnish the fundamental facts and truths taught by the extension agents. We would have you know that these institutions created by the farmers for practical ends have taken their forward place among the great educational institutions and teaching agencies of America.

